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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

To Port of Astoria:
in support of dredging upper Skipanon
Bern Shultz

TO : Record

DATE: 21 December 1971

FROM : Asst. Chief, Aids to Navigation Branch

SUBJECT: Warrenton Bridge

TRANSCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW ON 13 DECEMBER 1971 IN THE RESIDENCE OF MR. SCHULTZ OF WARRENTON, OREGON.

Mr. Schultz' home is on the east bank of the Skipanon River at the point the old channel extended the maximum distance to the east. The point of land on west bank opposite has now become an island, with the dredging of a short cut channel by the Corps of Engineers. The attached map illustrates these features.

Mr. Shields - Mr. Schultz was the former bridge tender on the Warrenton Bridge. I'm Ed Shields. Herb Palmberg is here and Commander Nelson also (remark directed to Mr. Schultz.)

What we came down here to talk to you about - Mr. Palmberg has made this application to the Corps to have the permit granted so that he can moor his equipment up here, and he has also asked us to have the bridge restored to a condition that will open faster than the way it is now -- brought back as a drawbridge the way it was originally -- and I understand from Mr. Palmberg that you were one of the men who operated the bridge while it had machinery to operate. Can you tell us about it?

Mr. Schultz - Well, I wasn't really the operator. Dewey Neal was the man who was hired, but we both worked in Warrenton Clam Co., which operated a clam cannery about -- well about 1/2 mile above the lift of the bridge and quite often he would be tied up butchering fish so I would go down and open the bridge. And, of course, sometimes if it was during the winter when it was wet and the planking was heavy, well it would take two of us.

Mr. Shields - How did you open it?

Mr. Schultz - Hand crank.

Mr. Shields - It was the hand crank that raised one hinged leaf?

Mr. Schultz - The bridge was designed practically like the Lewis and Clark Bridge that is operating now, only instead of having a motor, it had a - just a worm gear affair.

Mr. Shields - Hand cranked winch?

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Mr. Schultz - Hand cranked winch, and it was counterbalanced just the same as even the electric operated - the fact is, if you want to get in there and poke around you'll find that big concrete counterbalance under the bridge yet (laugh). It's still in there - it may be -you know- sunk in somewhat, but it's still there.

Mr. Shields - When you went down to open the bridge, about how long would it take from the time you walked down to the bridge until you could have it open?

Mr. Schultz - Well, we usually took a truck from the cannery.

Mr. Shields - That was to get you there. But after you got to the bridge, then how long did it take you?

Mr. Schultz - Well, if 2 of us, about 10 minutes to open and close.

Mr. Shields - You would have it back closed within 10 minutes?

Mr. Schultz - Oh, yes.

Mr. Shields - Oh, this is fast - -

Mr. Schultz - It come right up when you get that wheel to spinning when the planking was dry the counterweight would almost -you know - it just run right up, oh, soon as the boat steam through and run her right down. It wasn't no effort to open it, except when it was wet - and things that way. The planking getting wet, of course, that would really make it heavier and harder to crank up but it would come down easier. (Laughter).

Mr. Shields - How long were you working for these people when you occasionally opened the bridge?

Mr. Schultz - --- I really couldn't say for honest - I been working for the Clam Company though the better part of a year.

Mr. Shields - During that year, about how often would the bridge open?

Mr. Schultz - Well, usually about 4 times a day, when the cannery was running.

Mr. Shields - These were both bringing clams in?

Mr. Schultz - No, they was bringing fish.

Mr. Shields - Bringing fish in?

Mr. Schultz - Yeh. See, they had to - well, the cannery tender boat was name of ROSE. In fact, I think that boat is still afloatin somewhere around here. It was quite a good sized boat and it would come in and - well, sometimes it would make 2 trips in a day. They went around to the different barges

and picked up salmon and brought it in to the cannery. Of course, they was two other canneries above the Warrenton Clam Co. and well, they didn't can salmon, they was strictly clams. But they did have a boat or two and they would be sometimes we have opened that bridge as high as 8 and 9 times a day, but ordinarily average it would average 3 or 4, and th at was just during the season - fish season - such as that. That would only - of course the salmon season in those days was a lot longer than they are now. We didn't have these here closures for three or four months and then two weeks open, and like that. The spring Chinook season would last 3 to 4 months, and then the fall run would last up until December, or maybe later.

Mr. Shields - Do you know who paid for opening the bridge - the County or - -

Mr. Schultz - I was under the impression it was a County affair.

Mr. Shields - And the County paid you or - -

Mr. Schultz - They paid him - then he would share what he got with me.

Mr. Shields - They had an agreement with him to pay him for making these openings when somebody wanted to come through?

CDR Nelson - Do you remember what year this was, Mr. Schultz?

Mr. Schultz - Oh, I was tryin' to think. We moved down here in the spring of 1917 and I worked in the cannery that fall with clams. I don't remember working with the salmon, but I do remember helping Dewey open the bridge in the latter part of the year 1917, and then over into 1918. Along in the summer of 1918, I quit the cannery and went to work in the mill..

Mr. Shields - Do you remember when they rebuilt the bridge and took that feature out?

Mr. Schultz - Let's see - the Kelly Mills - that is another thing that required the bridge being open was the Kelly Lumber Co. just up above the bridge where this log dump is now. Dry sorting deck. It was in there and, of course, they had boom boats and one thing and another that went through. And that burned in 1927; the fact is I was working there; I was snowbound at Troutdale when I heard that the mill burned. I would say it was along in the early 1930's that the mill, I meant the bridge, was changed.

Mr. Shields - Oh, it could be hand cranked open up until about 1930?

Mr. Schultz - Well, maybe it could have been later than that, I don't 'member. Of course, after I quit the canneries and worked in the sawmill, it was different of course and I wasn't paying any attention to that stuff.

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Mr. Shields - Well, other than you lived here, didn't you?

Mr. Schultz - Oh yes, I lived here but I remember when the bridge was changed and I thought at the time -- Well, of course, with the mill being down and the cannery already shut down they wasn't very little traffic going through then. A few fish boats would maybe go through but - so - then they put in this scow lifting thing and I thought that was kind of a queer operation, but (loud laugh) even then, being that they wasn't any factories or anything up above - during Depression, money was hard to get, and the bridge had to be repaired, so they done it the cheapest way they could. That was my impression of it. There was such a small amount of traffic for awhile there.

CDR Nelson - Do you remember anything about the waterline being installed on the bridge?

Mr. Schultz - That wasn't put on the bridge until after this - it wasn't on the lift span, it went down through - underneath. But, after they dredged the channel up the Skipanon, then it started to scouring, till they started having trouble with that pipe, which is kinda just buried a little bit in the mud. It would scour underneath it and it kept breaking so then they hung it onto the bridge.

CDR Nelson - This was on to the existing bridge.

Mr. Schultz- Yeh, it was on one of the existing bridges. It never was on to the draw span

Mr. Shields - It's only been there like 5 years? - 8 years? - something like that? Yes - the waterline.

Mr. Schultz Oh I'd say longer than that. I really couldn't say just when they put it on. I wouldn't - - but they used these clam dipper scows - you know them old private (Dredges). What year was it we put in - rebuilt the dike here? Thirty-----? (Remark to Mrs. Schultz).

Mrs. Schultz- About 1933 or 1934.

Mr. Schultz - Well, if we rebuilt the dike - we put in the road ourselves, Dad and I, when we were building here - but we only had a 5 ft. or 6 ft. wide dike, and we hired one of these clam dippers to come in and dig sand and make it wide enough so we could build a road on top. What year did we build in here (remark directed to Mrs. Schultz.)

Mrs.Schultz - 1932.

Mr. Schultz - Well, that would have been about 1933 and the bridge was still hand-operated then. Yes, it wasn't the lift - scow business - then, so it must have been 1934 or 1935 that they changed it.

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CDR NELSON - What is your address here, Mr. Schultz?

Mr. Schultz - My house?

Mr. Shields - Mailing address.

Mr. Schultz - Box 334

Mr. Shields - Warrenton? (This was confirmed)

Mr.Palmberg - Do you remember much about the water depth of the river when they were going through with the ROSE and up to the cannery up above there?

Mr. Schultz - Well, there were times when they got hung up. See, they didn't have that short cut straight through from the bridge then. They come clear around the hump here - were forced to - and there were times when they was just a pile of mud behind the boat when they come in, if it was real low tide.

CDR Nelson - The Corps of Engineers wasn't doing any dredging then?

Mr. Schultz - Oh now - Well this - from the bridge up it hasn't been dredged except this short cut there where the bridge is - they went through this neck. The Slough they used to come out of the bridge and around old Kelly Mills was in here, settin' right where that cut went through and that (the short cut channel) was put in after the mill burned. After 1927.

Mr. Palmberg-Then they put that cut through - the Engineers did that work I presume? Did they dredge that whole channel out when they dredged that cut through there, do you remember?

Mr. Schultz -Well - it was done by the County, I think.

Mr.Palmberg -Well, it was all done with a clam shovel I am sure, but I just wondered how far up and down the river they might have gone.

Mr. Schultz- They just made the cut through and the logging outfits dug the rest and went up to their log dump, as far as I know. They had had these dredges come in time after time - even before the bridge was changed, they used to come in with those.

Mr. Shields -You said this boat the ROSE would hang up on the bottom occasionally. How large was the boat?

Mr.Schultz - It must have been close to a 50-footer, wasn't it.

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Mr. Shields - How much draft would you say?

Mr. Schultz - Well, empty it wouldn't be over 3 or 4 feet. It was quite a wide, flat bottom, a nice boat, but empty I would say it wouldn't run over 4-1/2 ft. of water.

Mr. Shields - And then loaded, it might be 6 or 7 feet?

Mr. Schultz - Well, it would go down --- when it was loaded, they didn't try to come in unless it was pretty well up - - the tide was pretty well in.

Note:
(All notations in parentheses put in for clarification).

Commander N. G. Nelson

Mr. Schultz

Mr. J. E. Shields

Mr. Palmberg